

(Washington, DC) – Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12), one of the few scientists serving in Congress, today lauded President Obama for his executive order lifting the ban on federal funding for embryonic stem cell research and his presidential memorandum directing the Head of the White House Office of Science and Technology to develop a strategy for restoring scientific integrity to government decision-making. Holt, who attended the signing ceremony in the White House, and other scientists believe that stem cells may provide possible treatments or cures for such diseases as cancer, Parkinson's disease, and diabetes.

"Today's actions validate the President's Inaugural declaration that we will 'restore science to its rightful place,'" Holt said. "As excited as I am about our removing restrictions on stem research, I am equally excited about the President's commitment to fostering an environment where science and scientific thinking can prosper. It is not just medical research that will benefit from this refreshing attitude."

The presidential memorandum on science is designed to ensure that government bases its policies on sound science, appoints advisors based on their credentials, and is honest about the science behind the decisions government makes.

The President's Executive Order directs the National Institutes of Technology to support and conduct responsible, scientifically worthy human stem cell research, including human embryonic stem cell research. It also directs NIH to develop guidelines, within 120 days, to proceed with research on newly developed stem cell lines. The Order also instructs the Administration to develop and enforce strict guidelines.

Holt worked in Congress to pass legislation to reverse President Bush's 2001 ban. He also opposed Bush Administration efforts to politicize scientific decisions regarding national parks, endangered species, global climate change, and air and water quality.

Video of Rep. Holt talking about the restoration of science in the Obama Administration can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKkmj07QW7U> .

###